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 F. W. MITCHELL,  
*Postmaster General.*  
 General Post Office.



## EXTRACTS.

## WIFE JEANIS.

The year is eight days old, and on the wall  
I've left my evergreen! But folks will come,  
And hide in all the branches, great and small,  
To look to bring upon my little home.

May I've a chance against their evil spells—  
Is not my dear old coming home from sea?  
(I'll mind me not of what the legend tells,  
The coming soon to this, his ain country.)

Al! furies, ye could never do me harm!  
For his sake, if ye knew how he can smile,  
And how his blue eyes shine, they'd be a charm  
All potent to destroy your evil will.

His over long away from me, dear lad,  
I sit lone in the dusk, and count the days;  
My heart, it grows sometimes very sad,  
And seldom sleighs now his gladsome lays.

I read the poem on my little ring—  
"The gift is small, but love is all," O love,  
These words unto my heartache comfort bring:  
God watch it, or my sailor up above!

So, dear, until the time ends I will hold,  
And suffer what I must, for all I'd  
When the great seas my lad from me stole  
To Scotland shall once more their brave ones send.

I am unlearned to understand for long;  
This weary time should take so very long;  
O! New Year, come with glad voices prophesy  
And bring my lad unto his ain country!

—Grace and Gog. NOPE DOUGLAS.

## A LITTLE COMPOSITION ON THE WHEELBARROW.

The Danbury News says: If you have occasion to use a wheelbarrow, leave it, when you are through with it, in front of the house with the handles toward the door. A wheelbarrow is the most complicated thing to fall over, on the face of the earth. A man will fall over one when he would never think of falling over anything else; he never knows when he has got through falling over it either; for it will tangle his legs and his arms, turn over with him and rear up in front of him, and just as he pauses in his profanity to congratulate himself, it takes a new turn, and scoops more skin off him, and he commences to evolve anew, and bump himself on fresh places. A man never ceases to fall over a wheelbarrow until it turns completely on its back or brings an accident which it cannot upset. It is the most offensive looking object there is, but it is more dangerous than a locomotive, and no man is secure with one unless he has a tight hold of its handles, and is sitting down on something. A wheelbarrow has its uses, without doubt, but in its leisure moments it is the great blighting curse on true dignity.

## THE STARS.

Of the physical constitution of the stars we know but little. Analogy tells us that they are bodies of the same character, and probably of much the same magnitude, as our own sun. Recent spectrum analysis goes further, and shows us from an examination of their light that the substances which exist most plentifully in the sun's atmosphere, such as sodium, are also to be met with largely among the stars. More information about them than this we have not much hope of attaining to.

There is no reasonable probability of our ever having telescopes powerful enough to give us further revelations of the nature of the stars. To our present instruments they appear simply as specks of light of no visible dimensions, and differing only in brightness. According to these varying degrees of brilliancy the stars are classified—the brightest being styled of the first magnitude, the next of the second magnitude, and so on through the telescopic stars down to the fifteenth. But this term ought not to be misunderstood. None of them have any perceptible magnitude whatever; even Sirius, the brightest, presents no marked disc like the planets; he is strictly a mathematical point of light—position without magnitude. It is probable that the stars do not differ very much in actual size and inherent brilliancy, and that their gradations of apparent brightness are due almost entirely to the different distances at which they are situated from us. This tiny orb, which is only revealed to us by the most powerful telescope, is probably a not less glorious sun than Sirius or Procyon, but it is buried at such a depth in the abysses of space as to be altogether invisible to the unaided eye.

From "The Romance of Astronomy," by R. K. Miller, M.A.

## ANCIENT GREECE AND MEDIEVAL ITALY.

As the Greek nation was the first which developed for itself anything worthy of the name of civilisation, Greece and the Greek colonies naturally form the whole history of their own civilised world. Other nations were simply outside barbarians. In the best days of Greece the interference of a foreign power in her internal quarrels would have seemed as if the sovereign of Morocco or China should claim the presidency of a modern European congress. In later times indeed Sparta and Athens, each in turn, found it convenient to contract political alliances with the Great King of Babylonia, or with their more dangerous neighbour at Persia. But the Medes always remained a purely external enemy or a purely external ally; the Macedonian had himself to become a Greek before his turn came to be the dominant power of Greece. But in medieval Italy the case was widely different. She affected, indeed, to apply to the medieval barbarians as all nations beyond her mountain-belt. Nor did assumption want some show of justification in her palpable pre-eminence in wealth, in refinement, in literature, in many branches of art; above all, in political knowledge and progress. But notwithstanding this, it was impossible to place medieval Italy so far above contemporary France or Spain or Germany, as ancient Greece stood above the rest of contemporary world. All the states of Western Christendom were fragments of a single Empire, whose laws and language and general civilisation had left traces among them all. A common religion, too, united them against the paganism of Cordova or Baghdad, too often against the schismatic who filled the throne of Constantinople. Italy for ages saw the lawful successor of her Kings and Caesars in a Barbarian of the race that she had expelled from her own soil. Most of her highest nobility drew their origin from the same foreign stock. No wonder then if nations less alien to her tongue and manners played a part in her internal politics which differed widely from any interference of barbarians in the affairs of Greece. Italian parties ranged themselves under the German watchwords of Guelph and Ghibelline, and fought under the standards of Anagnin, Florence, and Aragonese invaders. Florence looked to France—Italy to Italy—as her natural ally and her chosen protector. Sicily sought for her deliverer from French oppression in the rival power of a Spanish King. French and Spanish princes had been so often welcomed into Italy, they had so often filled Italian thrones and guided Italian politics, that men perhaps hardly understood the change or foresaw the consequences, when for the first time a King of France entered Italy in arms as the dominant of an Italian kingdom. Gradually, but only gradually, the strife which had once been a mere disputed succession between an Angevin and an Aragonese pretender grew into a strife between the mightiest potentates of the West for the mastery of Italy and of the world.

From "Historical Romance," Second Series, by Edward A. Freeman, M.A.

## LANDING DAY.

What a change in our appearance, as I came on deck ready to land! Everything had been polished and scrubbed. From the captain down to the meanest sailor boy, all had donned their "Sunday best." Passengers who had till then sported the very slovenliest of hats, and "seediest" of costumes, and bright-colored cravats. Ladies who had discarded feathered hats, which after the first fog resembled, drooping, chickens, and had muffled themselves in veils and "clouds," resumed the latest concoction of hair-structure, crowned with the daintiest of little hats; high insteps and higher heels, tripped impatiently to and fro; and voices were heard to exclaim, "When will the tender come and fetch us?" From "Our American Cousins at Egypt."

## THE "HEATHEN CHINESE."

At a dinner-party in New York I had the pleasure of meeting Mr. Bret Harte, well-known to us by his terse and vigorous, yet touching Californian stories, and by his original witty poetry. As I sat opposite to him at the dinner-table, the centre guest shedding his light on the guests from under a shade which left the remainder of the room in darkness, the world-renowned "Heathen Chinese" very naturally occurred to me. I raised my eyes to look at the face of the man in whose writings are combined so much pathos and so much fun, when lo! there stood the "Heathen Chinese" behind his chair! At first I attributed this vision to an optical delusion, brought on by the inseparable connection between the author and the popular name; but no, I was not dreaming—there stood John Chinaman, smooth-faced and unperturbed, with his pig-tail and loose garments, in the ample sleeves of which any number of "aces" and "borders" might have been safely stowed away! The mystery was soon explained to me by my neighbour (the author of "Little Brethren"). The Celestial of my vision was, in reality, a man of letters, a "Chinese cheap labour" having been so much abused and cried down, by their cleanliness, honesty, and sobriety, the Chinese have, as servants, proved a boon to those who owed years of misery and torment to Irish emigrants; and to judge by the culinary art displayed on this occasion, they can rival a French chef.

From "Our American Cousins at Egypt."

## OF GENTLEWOMEN WHO ARE SENT TO BOARDING-SCHOOLS.

It is dangerous to put young women to boarding-schools, unless their parents live so disorderly that their children may grow wicked or base by their examples. For most commonly in these schools they learn more vices than manners. It is a good task for one body to bring up one child well, and as they ought to be bred, at most two or three; but it is too much for one to breed up twenty young men. It is true they may educate their persons, but it is a doubtful whether do or can educate their minds. They may teach them to sing well, but it is a question whether they teach them to think well. They may teach them measures with the feet, and yet to mistake the measures of a good life. They may teach them to write by rule, but forget the rules of modesty. For the danger is in these schools where there are a great many gentlemen of several families and births, degrees of ages, various humors, different dispositions, natures, and qualities, that they do, like several sorts of fruits, which, when they are gathered and heaped together, soon putrify and corrupt, and soon become rotten at the core. Whereas, if every year, apple and plum, were laid by themselves apart in a dry and clean place, they would be found wholesome, and last as long as it was their nature to last. So if young women were bred singly, carefully, and industriously, one by one, there would be no danger of their learning from each other craft, dissembling, fraud, guile, slander, and the like. Besides, where there are many together of several dispositions, they are not only apt to catch the infection of ill qualities from each other, but they breed vices which ruin themselves, their fortunes and families, and like magpies, consume their estates, or eat a hole in their reputation. Besides, all board scholars of the effeminate sex are like sale made dressed as a cook's shop, which always tastes of the dripping-pan or smoke. So most commonly those that are bred at schools have a smack of the school, at least in their behavior—timidity, constraint, and their exercises, though they are commendable in women of quality, yet it is not these exercises or virtues (as they call them in Italy) which give them good breeding, but to instruct their youth in useful knowledge, to correct their ignorance with right understanding, to settle their minds to virtue, to govern their passions by reason, to rule their insatiable or disordered appetites with temperance; to teach them noble principles, honorable actions, modest behaviors, civil demeanors—to be clearly patient, and pious; things which none can catch either by example or instruction, or both, but those that have been nobly bred themselves.

From "The Cavalier and his Lady."

## THE PURITANS.

(From "Plays and Puritans," by Charles Kingsley.)

As for these Puritans having been merely the sour, narrow, inhuman persons they are vulgarly supposed to have been, creditable Jews. There were sour and narrow men among them; so there were in the opposite party. No Puritan could have had less poetry in him, less taste, less feeling than Land himself. But is there no poetry save words? No drama save that which is presented on the stage? Is this glorious earth, and the souls of living men, mere prose, as "current rate sacro," who will, forsooth, do the honour to make poetry out of a little of them (and of how little) by translating them into words, he himself, just in proportion as he is a good poet, will confess to be clatter, tawdry, ineffectual? Was there no poetry in these Puritans because they were not poets? We do not mean now the unwritten tragedy of the battle-palm and the charge; but simple idyllic poetry and quiet home-drama, love-poetry of the heart and the hearth, and the beauties of every-day human life? Take the most commonplace of them: was Zeal-for-Truth Thoreby, of Thoreby Rise in Deeping Fen, because his father had thought fit to give him an early and silly name, the less of a noble lad? Did his name prevent his being six feet high? Were his shoulders less broad for it, his cheeks less ruddy for it? He wore his flaxen hair of the same length that every one now wears theirs, instead of letting it hang half-way to his waist in essenced curls; but was he therefore less of a true Viking's son, bold-hearted as his sea-roving ancestors who won the Danubius by Canute's aid, and settled there on Thoresby Rise, to grow wheat and breed horses, generation succeeding generation, in the old manor-grange? He carried a Bible in his jacket; but did that prevent him, as Oliver rode past him with an approving smile on his face, from thinking himself a very handsome fellow, with his mustache and imperial, and bright red coat, and crimson velvet collar, in spite of many a hint, as he sat his father's great black horse as gracefully and firmly as any long-legged and essenced cavalier in front of him? Or did it prevent him thinking too, for a moment, with a throb of the heart, that sweet Cousin Patience far away at home, could he but see him, might have the same opinion of him as he had of himself? Would he not have been the worst of them? He was certainly not the worst for checking

it the next instant, with many a shudder for letting such "carnal vanities" rise in his heart, while he was "doing the Lord's work" in the teeth of death and hell; but was there no poetry in him then? No poetry in him, five minutes after, as he sat at the head of his bed, roiling and redolent of every soap? We are befuddled by names. Call him Crusader instead of Roundhead, and he seems at once (granting him only sincerity, which he had, and that of a right-a-fair kind) as complete a knight-errant as ever watched and prayed, ere putting on his spurs, in fantastic Gothic chapel, beneath "storied windows richly dight." Was there no poetry in him, either, half-an-hour afterwards, as he lay bleeding across the corpse of the gallant horse, waiting for his turn with the surgeon, and fumbled for the Bible in his boot, and tried to hum a psalm, and thought of Cousin Patience, and his father, and his mother, and how they would hear, at least, that he had played the man in Israel that day, and resisted unto blood, striving against sin, and the Man of Sin? And was there no poetry in him too, as he came wanted along Thoresby dyke, in the quiet autumn eve, home to the house of his forefathers, and saw afar off the knot of tall poplars rising over the broad misty flat, and this one great abel, testing its sheets of silver in the dying gusts; and knew that they stood before his father's door? Who can tell all the pretty child-memories which fitted across his brain at that night, and made him forget that he was a wounded cripple? There is the dyke where he and his brothers earned the great pike which stole the ducklings—how many years ago?—while pretty little Patience stood by trembling, and shrieked at each snap of the brute's wide jaws; and there, down that long dark lane, ruffling with crimson in the sunset breeze, he and his brother staked home in triumph with Patience, when his uncle died. What day that was! when, in the clear bright winter moon, they laid the gate upon the ice, and tied the beef-bones under the four corners, and packed little Patience on a how pretty she looked, though her eyes were red with weeping, as she peeped out from among the heap of blankets and horse-hides; and how merrily their long long-runners whistled along the ice-bridge between the high banks of sighing road, as they loved home their way treasures in triumph, at a pace like the race-horses, to the dear old home among the poplar-trees. And now he was going home to meet her, after a mighty victory, a deliverance from heaven, second only in his eyes to that Red-see one. Was there no poetry in his heart at that thought? Did not the glowing sunset, and his red-beds which it transpired before him into sheets of golden flame, seem tokens that the glory of God was going before him in his path? Did not the sweet clamour of the wild-fowl, gathering for one rich peep, ere they sank into rest, seem to him as God's bells chiming him home in triumph, with peals sweeter and bolder than those of Lincoln or Peterborough steeple-houses? Did not the very lagings as he tumbled, softly waving, before him, did that old years' way to welcome the wanderer home in the name of heaven? Fair Patience, too, though she was a Puritan, yet did not her cheek flush, her eye grow dim, like any other girl's, as she saw far off the red coat, like a sliding spark of fire, coming slowly along the staid fen-bank, and fled up stairs into her chamber to pray, half that it might be half that it might not be her? Was there no poetry in that man's wars and human language when he entered the courtyard gate? Did not the old dog lick his Puritan handkerchief lovingly as if it had been a Cavalier's? Did not the lads and lasses run out shouting? Did not the old yeoman father hug him, weep over him, hold him at arm's length, and hug him again, as heartily as any other John Bull, even though the next moment he called all to kneel down and thank him who had led his boy home, and again, after bestowing on him the grace to bind kings in chains and nobles with links of iron, and content to death for the faith delivered to the saints? And did not Zeal-for-Truth look about as wistfully for Patience as any other man would have done, longing to see her, yet not daring even to ask for her? And when she came down at last, was she less lovely in his eyes, less sweet, than all Horric's Daughters, Waller's Saccharine flames, darts, posies, love-knots, anagrams, and the rest of the insinuating cast of the court? What if Zeal-for-Truth had never strung two rhymes together in his life? Did not his heart go for inspiration to a loftier Helicon, when he whispered to itself, "My love, my dove, my undressed, is but one" than if he had filled pages with sonnets about Venuses and Cupids, long-necked shepherds and cruel nymphs? And was there no poetry, true idyllic poetry, as of Longfellow's "Evangeline" itself, in that trip round the old farm next morning, when Zeal-for-Truth, after looking over every beifer, and peeping into every sty, would needs canter down by his father's side to the horse-fen, with his arm in a sling, while the partridges whirled up before them, and the lads and lasses like grey smoke after the horse, and the colts grey whinnying round, with staring eyes and streaming manes; and the two dashed on in the same sober horse-like English tone, alternately of "The Lord's great dealings" by General Cromwell, the pride of all honest men, and the price of troop-horses at the next Horse-fair? Poetry in those old Puritans? Why not? They were men of like passions with ourselves. They loved, they hated, they brought up children; they feared, they sinned, they sorrowed, they fought—they conquered. There was poetry enough in them, be sure, though they liked it like men, instead of singing it like birds.

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